

ture books, poems, scripts, advertisements" (47), plus the children's own life stories and the new tales that are created when they respond to existing ones.

While Barton and Booth have a valuable message for teachers, the full impact of *Stories in the classroom* is often lost because the book needs a tighter organization. For the first half of the book one is never sure whether its main purpose is to be about the powers of story or a practical classroom guide. Some statements are positively misleading; for example, the final chapter begins: "We described in the last chapter our reasons for helping children respond to the stories they have listened to or read" (112). The previous chapter deals with a rationale for response to story but by far the greatest amount of space is devoted to *how* to respond to stories rather than *why* to. Strange, for a book on storytelling, its own story is sometimes not very clear.

Mary Cronin teaches graduate and undergraduate classes in Language Arts and Reading at the University of Regina.

SUSPENSEFUL CHRONICLES OF THE DAVARD FAMILY

Scorpion's treasure. Daniel Sernine. Trans. Frances Morgan. Black Moss Press, 1990. 143 pp., \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-88753-211-X; **The sword of Arhahal.** Daniel Sernine. Trans. Frances Morgan. Black Moss Press, 1990. 181 pp., \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-88753-212-8.

Quebec has many excellent fiction writers for children, but most of them are still unknown in English Canada. Judging from their recent publication of eight titles in translation, Black Moss Press will soon change the situation. Some of the titles are by such well-known French Canadian writers as Daniel Sernine, Denis Côté, Joanne Masse and Charles Montpetit.

Two of the titles, *Scorpion's treasure* and *The sword of Arhahal*, are by award-winning author Daniel Sernine. They are the first two volumes in his fascinating chronicle of the Davard Family. The events take place in one of the first settlements in New France in a small town called Neubourg near Quebec.

Scorpion's treasure, tells the adventures of Luc and Benoit who witness the arrival of a mysterious ship that anchors in the middle of Anse-au-Breton. The two come upon sailors unloading heavy bags and storing them in the cave that the boys have recently discovered. Suspicious, they enter the cave secretly, uncover bags of gold, and plan to later take some of the booty. The next day, when the Baron's son, Captain Davard, a privateer for the King of France, arrives in his ship, the "Scorpion", Luc and Benoit realize that he is the owner of the mysterious ship. His treasure well-guarded, Captain Davard goes in search of his father, whom the settlers suspect is involved in sorcery, and soon learns that the Baron is dead.

In *The sword of Arhupal*, the magical sword Arhupal, which in *Scorpion's treasure* was used to confront and defeat Baron Davard, is stolen by the baron's grandson Luc-Alexandre Davard. Guillaume Vignal and Didier Bertin, fearing the return of sorcery and evil in Neubourg, join forces to try to recover the sword hidden in the manor. Didier gains access to the manor by posing as an apprentice painter. Soon, however, danger mounts, and trapped in the cellars of the manor, Didier is pursued by Luc-Alexandre in a mad chase. With help from an unexpected source, Didier and Guillaume succeed in returning the sword to old Philanselme in Neubourg.

Both stories have suspense. Indeed, Sernine is a master at creating situations and building them to a climax while keeping his readers turning the pages in anticipation. His strength is not in character development, but in the description of events involving intricate and believable characters. Still the complexity and cumulation of events make the novels confusing at times and require the reader's full attention. This is particularly apparent in *Scorpion's treasure* in which three subplots are developed simultaneously, leaving the reader puzzled at times.

Both texts are competently translated by Frances Morgan who faithfully captures the essence of both original novels.

André Gagnon is the Head of Children's Services at the Regina Public Library. He is co-editor of Canadian Books for Young People/Livres canadiens pour la jeunesse. (University of Toronto, 1988) and has written articles on translation.

SCI-FI'S BREEZY AND SERIOUS SIDES

I spent my summer vacation kidnapped into space. Martyn Godfrey. Scholastic-TAB, 1990. 136 pp. \$3.50 paper. ISBN 0-590-43418-7; **Those who watch over the earth.** Daniel Sernine. Trans. David Homel. Black Moss Press, 1990. 109 pp. \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-88753-214-4; **Argus steps in.** Daniel Sernine. Trans. Ray Chamberlain. Black Moss Press, 1990. 170 pp. \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-88753-216-0.

Martyn Godfrey, a former teacher who has won a number of awards for his books, may be best known for his Ms Teeny-Wonderful stories. His first publications were in the field of science fiction, however, and it is to this that he has returned in *I spent my summer vacation kidnapped into space*.

Intended for readers aged eight to twelve, this tale describes the adventures that befall two twelve-year-olds in "the near future." Kidnapped while rock-hunting in the asteroid belt, they are transported to a distant planet where they must first fight two giant slime worms for the entertainment of the al-